

ARTICLE APPEARED

ON PAGE A-12NEW YORK TIMES
23 JANUARY 1980

Spy Who Sold U.S. Secrets To Soviet Flees Coast Prison

By ROBERT LINDSEY

Special to The New York Times

LOS ANGELES, Jan. 22 — Christopher John Boyce, who was convicted in 1977 of selling American military secrets to the Soviet Union, escaped last night from the maximum security Federal Correctional Institution at Lompoc, 170 miles north of here.

Prison officials said that the 26-year-old Californian was present at a 4 P.M. head count yesterday but was gone when his cell was checked at 10 o'clock last night.

They said that a wooden ladder, apparently made in a prison woodshop, and a pair of metal-cutting shears had been found near one of two 10-foot high fences that surround the prison.

The prison was upgraded by the Federal Bureau of Prisons last summer to become one of its most "escape-proof" prisons. Among other things, long strands of two-inch wire honed like a razor blade were placed atop the outer fence.

Federal and Local Search

Investigators speculated that Mr. Boyce had used the ladder to scale the inner of the two fences, used the shears to cut barbed wire atop the fence, and then climbed over an exterior gate topped with the strands of razor-sharp wire to make his getaway.

Federal agents and local policemen mounted a search after the escape was discovered. William Bailey, a prison spokesman, said there was no evidence that confederates had helped Mr. Boyce, although investigators said they had not ruled out this possibility. The escape was the first from the Lompoc prison since the renovations last August.

The prison is adjacent to but physically not part of a minimum security prison called "the camp." It was there that H.R. Haldeman and several other persons convicted in the Watergate scandal served their terms.

Mr. Boyce was serving a 40-year term resulting from his conviction in April 1977 of eight counts of espionage and conspiracy to commit espionage.

'Thousands' of Documents Sold

According to the Federal Bureau of Investigation, Mr. Boyce and Andrew Daulton Lee, a childhood friend with whom he had been reared in the affluent southern California community of Palos Verdes, sold "thousands" of documents involving secret American espionage satellites to the Soviet Union from April 1973 to the time they were arrested in January, 1977.

Mr. Boyce was hired in mid-1974 by the TRW Company, one of the Central Intelligence Agency's principal suppliers of satellites used in surveillance of the Soviet Union and other foreign countries, in suburban Redondo Beach. His father, a former agent of the Federal Bureau of Investigation who had become director of plant security for the McDonnell Douglas Corporation, helped his son get the job.

Although Mr. Boyce said later that he expected only to obtain a menial job at the TRW plant, he was assigned to a highly secret communications center called the "black vault" to operate cryptographic equipment that transmitted classified information between the defense plant and the Central Intelligence Agency's headquarters in Langley, Va.

Protest Over C.I.A. Actions

Mr. Boyce later testified in court, and told interviewers, that some of the messages he handled, dealing with covert C.I.A. operations were repugnant to him and that he had wanted to make a "statement" protesting the clandestine operations.

He said he had proposed to Mr. Lee, who was a fugitive on drug charges, that they sell information from the black vault to Soviet agents in Mexico City. Over a period of almost two years, Soviet agents paid them almost \$80,000, Mr. Boyce said at his trial.

Their commerce with the Soviet Union ended when Mr. Lee attempted to make a delivery to the Soviet Embassy in Mexico City on Jan. 6, 1977 and was arrested by Mexican policeman.

Mr. Lee had contended that Mr. Boyce had lured him into the scheme by saying they would both be working for the C.I.A. in selling wrong technical data to the Russians. Mr. Lee was also convicted of espionage and is serving a life term at Lompoc.

The story of the childhood and crimes of the two youths is the subject of a book published in November by Simon & Schuster, "The Falcon And the Snowman: A True Story of Friendship and Espionage," that was written by this reporter.

STAT